



GAIL FARBER, Director

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

"To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service"

900 SOUTH FREMONT AVENUE
ALHAMBRA, CALIFORNIA 91803-1331
Telephone: (626) 458-5100
<http://dpw.lacounty.gov>

ADDRESS ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO:
P.O. BOX 1460
ALHAMBRA, CALIFORNIA 91802-1460

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IN REPLY PLEASE

REFER TO FILE: **PR-0
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TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Gail Farber *Gail Farber*
Director of Public Works

**BOARD MOTION OF NOVEMBER 24, 2009
AGENDA ITEM 26-C
REPAIR WORK ON ANGELES FOREST HIGHWAY
ASSOCIATED WITH THE STATION FIRE**

As directed in this motion, Public Works has conducted additional media and public outreach to ensure the public is alerted in advance of possible closures of Angeles Forest Highway and Angeles Crest Highway due to winter weather conditions or associated repair work. Much of the effort was already underway as part of the Coordinated Agency Recovery Effort (CARE) that was established by Board Resolution on September 15, 2009.

A summary of the recommendations and activities associated with this motion is as follows:

- Organize a town hall meeting in the Antelope Valley in December (and publicize the meeting information in advance in the local media) to address the repair work on Angeles Forest Highway associated with the Station Fire, and publicize the meeting in advance in concert with Antelope Valley media outlets.

Public Works and the CARE team organized a town hall meeting on December 17, 2009, at the Larry Chimbole Cultural Center in Palmdale. The meeting included presentations by Road Maintenance Division on forest winter road closures together with a presentation by the Programs Development Division on the pending Sierra Highway Enhancement Project. The meeting was also attended by local media.

- Keep the existing "Driver Notification Signs" in place on southbound State Route 14 and activate them as far in advance as possible to alert motorists to impending temporary closures due to anticipated inclement weather.

The Public Works notification signs are placed at Angeles Forest Highway south of Sierra Highway and at the Los Angeles City boundary at Big Tujunga Canyon Road in advance of anticipated inclement weather. Due to the risk of vandalism to the signs, they are returned to Public Works' yards for safekeeping after the weather systems have passed. The CARE team will continue to provide as much advance notice to motorists about road closures as possible.

- Identify the feasibility of creating a "Road Conditions" AM radio broadcast for information pertaining to the opening and closing of Angeles Forest and Angeles Crest Highways between Antelope Valley and La Canada-Flintridge.

The feasibility of establishing a "Road Conditions" AM radio broadcast is still being investigated. A regional broadcast would require a Federal Communications Commission (FCC) waiver since Route 14 is a State highway. It is likely that Public Works would be granted FCC approval since public information is being provided regarding access to a national forest. The cost to establish a radio broadcast is estimated at approximately \$75,000, including broadcast equipment, poles, antennas, installation, and electrical service. In addition, approval from Caltrans to establish an easement to place equipment along Angeles Crest Highway would also be required. In the meantime, the CARE team continues to provide media alerts to radio and television stations in advance of anticipated road closures and reopenings.

- Establish an e-mail notification system that will alert Antelope Valley residents (and other interested parties) concerning upcoming closures of Angeles Forest Highway due to anticipated inclement weather.

Public Works already has an established free electronic notification system called e-Notify. The system offers e-mail notifications providing up-to-date information on topics or events of interest, including the latest updates on road closures, storm and fire notices, and debris and mudflow forecasts. As part of the continuing CARE outreach program, the e-Notify system has been promoted heavily and recommended to residents of at-risk communities as an effective way to receive information about current conditions. As a result of this outreach, subscriptions to the e-Notify system have increased by 41 percent since October 1, 2009.

- Conduct additional media and public outreach concerning road condition information available on the Department's CARE website.

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The CARE outreach program that began on November 15, 2009, continues. To date, the CARE team, which now includes US Forest Service, U.S. Geological Survey, Caltrans, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Resources Conservation Service, City of Los Angeles, County of Los Angeles Fire and Sheriff's Departments, and County of Los Angeles Office of Emergency Management has conducted 26 public meetings and city/town council presentations in at-risk communities bordering the Angeles National Forest and in Rancho Palos Verdes. The meetings included presentations by CARE agencies as well as information and materials about debris and mudflow prevention. A dedicated CARE website was also established on September 30, 2009. To date, the website, which features dozens of links with information and resources on fire recovery and debris flow preparation, has received more than 5,000 visitors. Public Works has also established media alert templates for projected road closures as well as actual road closures. A public service announcement warning residents about debris flow dangers has also been produced for broadcast on city cable television channels. The CARE teams' Public Information Officers have also completed more than 50 media interviews about debris flow preparedness and the efforts of first responders. These comprehensive efforts will continue throughout the winter season.

If you have any questions, please call me or your staff may contact Bob Spencer, Chief Public Affairs, at (626) 458-4070.

cc: Chief Executive Office (William T Fujioka, Lari Sheehan)
Executive Office